



National Congress Bulletin

JUNE-JULY 1956 PUBLISHED BY THE NATIONAL CONGRESS OF PARENTS AND TEACHERS • CHICAGO 11 • VOL. 23, NO. 10

Memo to Local Presidents:

SINCE our Action Program was published in March, my conviction that it is a timely and vital one has been constantly reinforced. The problems with which it is concerned are genuine and urgent, and the suggested activities are workable, realistic, and necessary.

Unstinted praise of the program came from delegates at our national convention in May and from specialists who participated in the convention program. On more than one occasion when a parent-teacher member asked a specialist, "What can the P.T.A. do to help solve this problem?" the answer was, "Consult your Action Program," or "Carry out the suggestions in your Action Program."

This month I want to discuss with you the direct and immediate bearing our Action Program can have in solving a problem of widespread concern—the fitness of American youth. In June, I attended a national conference on this subject that has been long awaited—the President's Conference on Fitness of American Youth. For two days, at the request of President Eisenhower, 150 leaders of national organizations, specialists, and others interested in the well-being of youth explored this problem, which has been a core concern of our organization for longer than we can remember.

Defining Fitness

• What do we mean by fitness? That was one of the first questions discussed at the Conference. The participants agreed that fitness included more than physical health and physical fitness, important as these are.

We know that illness, poor health, low vitality, uncorrected physical defects make it very difficult for a person to function efficiently and satisfactorily, whether the person is a child trying to

do school work or an adult trying to carry on his duties at home, in the office, in the factory, or on the farm.

But we know also that emotional disorders and mental illness make it equally—if not more—difficult to live a harmonious and productive life. Those who are morally and spiritually unfit and unsound are an even greater problem to themselves and society, for their conduct is likely to harm themselves and others. At best they lead empty, fruitless lives.

When we talk about the fitness of American youth, then, we are talking about *total* fitness—physical, mental, social, moral, and spiritual fitness. We mean the capacity of the individual to function competently and happily as family member, neighbor, worker, and citizen of the community, state, and nation, and to use his leisure time with benefit to himself and others.

The President's Conference could not explore all the institutions, agencies, and programs that help to make young people fully fit, so we concentrated our attention primarily on health, physical education, safety, and recreational programs, which have as their goals the development of:

"Physical efficiency that is based on sound functioning of bodily processes, the correction of remediable defects, and the attainment of endurance, strength, agility, and coordination.

"Skills and understandings that lead to safe and healthful living and encourage participation in satisfying recreation activities with one's own age group, with family members, and with others.

"Interests in activities that release tension, provide creative out-

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• Mrs. Brown presides at an Executive Committee meeting, immediately following the convention. The members who discussed business referred to the Committee and made plans for future meetings of the organization are (from left): Mrs. James C. Parker, Mrs. H. G. Stinnett, Jr., Mrs. T. H. Ludlow, Mrs. Ralph Hobbs, Joseph A. Hunter, James H. Snowden, Mrs. Rollin Brown, Mrs. Ruth Gagliardo, Mrs. L. E. Burr, Mrs. Louise S. Walker, and Mrs. L. W. Alston. Three members at extreme right from back to front: Mrs. Ramon Lawrence, Mrs. Jennelle Moorhead, and Mrs. Fred Keeler. Kenneth E. Oberholtzer, another Committee member, is not in the picture.

(Continued from page 1)

lets, build health and strength, and develop character and good sportsmanship."

The Current Situation

- What did we find out about the adequacy of existing programs, leadership, and facilities for developing fitness? How much public support and understanding of the problem is there?

The following facts were brought out in the keynote address of Vice-president Richard M. Nixon, in a Fact Sheet for the Conference, and in the discussions of participants:

- The mechanization of living and the development of spectator sports and entertainment have cut down opportunities for physical exercise.
- Less than 50 per cent of the boys and girls in high school have physical education.
- Ninety-one per cent of the nation's 150,000 elementary schools have no gymnasiums.
- Ninety per cent of the elementary schools have less than the recommended minimum of five acres of land for essential play areas.
- Sixty-eight per cent of the high schools have less than the recommended ten acres.
- Only 1,200 of the 17,000 communities in the United States have full-time recreation leadership. There are serious shortages of both professional and volunteer recreation leaders.
- Forty per cent of those entering the armed forces in World War II were unable to swim fifty feet. (Drownings between the ages of five and forty-five, it was noted, are second only to motor vehicles as a cause of accidental death.)
- Programs for girls lag behind those for boys.
- Less than 5 per cent of American youth have had the opportunity to enjoy the experience of camping and outdoor living.
- Youngsters who might benefit most from participation stay away from playing fields through fear of not being successful. Intramural programs are a step in the right direction, but they are not yet adequate.
- Provision of space for health, physical education, recreation programs



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• When fifty-five visitors from Japan came to National Congress headquarters on May 25, Tsunenobu Shiozawa, president of the Japan National Congress of Parents and Teachers, presented a Japanese P.T.A. flag to Roe M. Wright, business manager of the National Congress, and Margaret S. Wells, assistant to the director of the National Office. At the left is Mrs. J. Frank Lindsey, president of the Chicago Region. The Japanese visitors attended the National Congress convention in San Francisco before touring Chicago and Washington, D. C.

is an urgent need. It is almost impossible to recapture space once it has been taken over for other purposes.

These are matters of concern to parent-teacher members and to all others interested in the well-being of youth and future well-being of our whole citizenry. What can be done?

Conference Recommendations

- Among the important recommendations of the Conference were the following:

A commission or a committee should be created at the federal level "to dramatize the importance of fitness, stimulate research work, and coordinate the efforts" of the many agencies engaged in fitness programs.

Fitness programs should have more financial support from both public and private sources.

Varied, balanced, and flexible programs should be provided to meet the needs of all children and youth—girls as well as boys—from the handicapped to the most skilled. Such programs should be available to all children, "wherever they live and under whatever conditions." Youth should be involved

in the planning, and home-school-community cooperation is essential.

There should be daily programs in physical education for school pupils, more health instruction, improved health examinations and follow-ups, cumulative health records, and cooperation of school and public health personnel and physicians in private practice in health and athletic programs.

More and better leadership, both professional and voluntary, must be recruited and prepared for physical education and recreation programs. In the community, representatives of school and recreation staffs, parent and youth groups, churches, public and voluntary agencies, and other community groups should be part of the community leadership team that plans the community program.

Facilities, ranging from play space in home and back yard to camping site in national parks and forests, must be provided. Adequate provisions for recreation opportunities are needed in multiple dwellings, school plants, and throughout the community. Particular attention should be paid to safeguarding gymnasiums, health suites, and activity rooms in schools, for when schools become overcrowded these areas are likely

to be sacrificed. Community planning should result in reservation of space for community recreation as new neighborhoods are developed, and community agencies must plan for maximum use of existing facilities. There should be better coordination of planning for recreation areas, buildings, and equipment by state, county, city, and school district.

Fitness programs should begin in the home and involve adults as well as children. The example of adults is the strongest motivation that we can offer youth to value and attain fitness.

While the Conference was still in session, its recommendations were communicated to the President. His response was prompt and most satisfying. He promised not only to set up a President's Council on Youth Fitness (composed of members of his Cabinet "who head departments having activities in this area") but also to establish a President's Citizens Committee on the Fitness of American Youth. The function of the citizens committee, he said, would be "to alert America on what can and should be done to reach the much-desired goal of a happier, healthier, and more totally fit youth in America."

The Role of the P.T.A.

- What can a parent-teacher association do to help in the development of adequate fitness programs? The answer is in our Action Program.

Let me quote a very pertinent sentence from the President's message to the Conference. "The fitness of our young people," he said, "is essentially a home and local community problem." Now, our national theme and the title of our Action Program is "The Family and the Community: Each Shapes the Other—The P.T.A. Serves Both." Is not our role clear?

Our Action Program is geared to helping the family and the community solve this problem. In the Action Program your association will find suggestions for a variety of activities and projects that will assist the family and



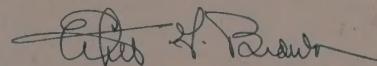
- During the annual conference of the Third District of the Texas Congress, Mrs. D. C. Robertson, local exhibits chairman; Mrs. Leon S. Price, Texas Congress president; and Mrs. R. S. Lindsay, Third District president, paused to admire the attractive P.T.A. exhibit.

the community in helping youngsters attain physical, mental, moral, and spiritual fitness. In the Program your unit will find suggestion after suggestion that matches the recommendations of the President's Conference. The work will involve all your parent-teacher committees, but especially committees on health, recreation, school education, mental health, preschool service, parent and family life education, safety, citizenship, and character and spiritual education.

Through our Action Program we can help American boys and girls become fully fit for competent, satisfying participation in the vigorous life of a free society. This is something worth working for. Let us put our Action Program to work.



My best wishes to you and your executive committee for stimulating and productive sessions as you put the final touches on plans for your unit's action program next year. May you and your family enjoy a happy and refreshing summer.



MRS. ROLLIN BROWN, President
National Congress of Parents and Teachers

A Progress Note

- Perhaps your term of office has expired. If so, won't you please turn over to your successor your file of the "National Congress Bulletin"? Thus, as one leader passes on to another leader the information that helps him equip himself for his job, parent-teacher progress and achievement is continued.

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IMPORTANT

Please turn to page 50 of your *Parent-Teacher Manual*, Section II, and strike out the fifth point listed there under "In the Community": *Replace Halloween mischief by learning about and sponsoring the UNICEF Trick or Treat Program.* Due to a printing error, this item was not removed when the *Manual* was printed. The Trick or Treat Program was not approved by the National Congress.

QUESTIONS FROM THE FLOOR

SAN FRANCISCO
CALIFORNIA • 1956

ANSWERED AT THE

National Convention



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• Philip G. Green (left), director, Division of Juvenile Delinquency Service, Children's Bureau, and Heman Stark, director, Department of the Youth Authority, State of California, participate in the Tuesday juvenile protection meetings.

► Is there any answer to the teacher shortage?

PAUL J. MISNER, *president, American Association of School Administrators*

• Under the stress of emergency many ideas are suggested—increase in class size, effective use of television, use of teachers' aids, and abandonment of child labor laws and compulsory education. Some of these, of course, are hasty and ill-conceived. While we must keep our minds open to possible solutions, I confidently hope the ten million members of the parent-teacher association will stand firmly against any proposal that would deny children the daily guidance of a competent, sensitive, and friendly teacher. It seems inconceivable that the American people will ever agree to deny large segments of its population the opportunity for education beyond high school.

We are going to need new educational policies. The great promise of the White House Conference on Education lies in what happens to its recommendations in the next decade.

► How can we decide what teachers should be paid?

JOHN LESTER BUFORD, *president, National Education Association*

• I know what the National Education Association says about minimum and maximum salaries, but I don't know the

exact amount a teacher should be paid in any one community. I can only answer that if you can recommend teaching to your sons and daughters as one of the first five most desirable professions, and you can suggest that they come home to teach, the chances are that teachers' salaries in your community are satisfactory.

► What are some of the major reasons for secondary school dropouts?

CHARLOTTE D. ELMOTT, *director, guidance and secondary education, Santa Barbara city schools*

• One of the big reasons, of course, is related to the individual's intellectual equipment. A young person is not going to continue in school if the reading level is beyond him and he can't understand the text. Then there are the youngsters—and some of them are gifted—who drop out because they come from homes where there is no tradition of continued education, or where any amount of money they can earn is important to the family.

► We've been hearing that we need to get tough in our handling of juvenile problems. Just what is meant by "tough"?

PHILIP G. GREEN, *director, Division of Juvenile Delinquency Service, Children's Bureau, U.S. Department of Health, Education, and Welfare*

• To me it means the setting up of intelligent limitations to go across the board—school, home, juvenile courts, and society. It means teaching our young people to live within the limitations that society imposes on all of us.



Watch for more convention answers
to questions of P.T.A. concern in
future issues of the *Bulletin*.

► **How can we involve teen-agers in recreational activities?**

DOROTHEA LENSCHE, *national chairman, Committee on Recreation; superintendent of recreation, Portland, Oregon*

- Cooperation with young people is essential in the field of recreation. Never plan a single program or a physical resource without the help of those individuals who will be particularly concerned. High school students should be in on planning and take over leadership responsibilities not only for their own age level but for the younger level. Give them an outlet for expressing their dreams of the ideal community.

► **What part does a city planning commission play in the allocation of funds or space for a city's recreational needs? Who pays for upkeep of facilities?**

GEORGE HJELTE, *general manager, Department of Recreation and Parks, Los Angeles*

- It is a primary responsibility of the planning agency to see that its master plan sets aside certain portions of the city or district or county for recreation or park purposes. To maintain operations of public facilities such as playgrounds, taxes are levied within the area and the money is expended by the park or recreation department. Private facilities often receive expense allocations from such organizations as the Community Chest.

► **Does the school nurse have time for conferences with teachers? If so, what do they accomplish?**

HARRY SCHOENFELD, *superintendent, Dacoto School District, California*

- Ideally the nurse schedules a conference with the classroom teacher, who has a substitute to take over at the time they get together. Usually they meet in the teacher's workroom and, with all their records at hand, discuss children's problems found in the home and in the classroom and try to make arrangements for handling them. Their findings may lead to conferences of parents, physicians, the nurse, and the teacher.

► **How many people in the United States are drinking fluoridated water?**

FRANK E. LAW, *chief, developmental research, Division of Dental Public Health, U.S. Public Health Service*

- About twenty-six million in thirteen hundred communities was the count the first of this month.

► **How can we enlist community participation from individuals who are disinterested and apathetic?**

MISS LENSCHE

- So many times people feel that problems under discussion are nation-wide or city-wide rather than a concern in their immediate neighborhood. If the problem could be tied into something

that personally affects them, I believe you would get a more constructive reaction and a desire for action.

► **What special requirements apply to volunteer leadership within an organization?**

ROY SORENSEN, *general secretary, Y.M.C.A., San Francisco*

- In the modern concept a leader must distribute his leadership and be able to help members of his group become *active participants* with full shares of the responsibility. It also involves *knowledge of content and ability* to impart it to others.

► **Could you spell out a few of the essentials of a good, sound, home safety program?**

ELLIS D. SOX, M.D., *director of public health, Department of Public Health, San Francisco*

- We ought to find out more about the causes of accidents in our particular areas, but we can adapt figures and plans developed in other areas to our own situations. Keep in mind that a county-wide program carries more weight and involves more people. Consult the state health departments, medical societies, and your doctors. Talk up home accidents, because they constitute more than 50 per cent of all accidents. Develop a program that involves the participation of a great number of people and all of the community resources.

(Continued on page 6)



• A resource panel of national officers and chairmen participate in the convention session that discussed "Organizing for Community Services." Dr. Paul Sheats, lower extreme left, leads the group discussion. Roy

Sorenson, lower extreme right, addressed the group prior to the general discussion. Three members of the national staff, upper left, screened the 106 questions that came from the floor.

(Continued from page 5)



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• Three schoolmen in attendance at the convention find many topics of mutual interest. From left: Kenneth E. Oberholzer, superintendent of Denver schools and second vice-president of the Congress; Paul J. Misner, president, American Association of School Administrators; and John Lester Buford, president, National Education Association.



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• Panel members at the health sessions discuss home accidents, fluoridation, and competitive sports. From left: Dr. Ellis Sox; Dr. Frank Hesse, Bureau of Chronic Disease and Bureau of Hospitals, California Public Health Department; Marguerite Augustin, Bureau of Health Education, California Public Health Department; William Griffith, School of Public Health, University of California; Patricia Hill, Bureau of Health Education, California Public Health Department; Dr. Frank Law; and Frank Nord, department of physical education, University of California.

► How are people of the community brought into a school's work experience program?

HEMAN G. STARK, director, Department of the Youth Authority, state of California

• It is well for anyone who employs young people—merchants, manufacturing organizations, labor unions—to work directly with the school. Although the program is centered in the school, it also must be approved by people who use the students' services.

► How can a school program be enriched for the gifted child?

J. PAUL LEONARD, president, San Francisco State College

• We must give him all the attention he deserves and all we can possibly give. However, I don't believe it's necessary to curtail education for other children in order to meet needs of the gifted child. We do need to pay more attention in our high schools to making standards higher for children who are able to reach them, thus pulling up the mental capacity of all our young people as high as it can go. This requires skillful teaching.

► What are the standards for good programming?

EVELYN MILLIS DUVALL, lecturer, author, and counselor on parent and family life education

• It includes, first, the active participation of many interested people working together. A good program functions at the teachable moment when the persons involved are ready to take a step ahead. It effectively selects and uses existing resources and personnel. And, last, it values local unity and what is happening in the local situation.

► Would you say the strength of the parent-teacher movement rests in its national or state program or at the local level?

MR. STARK

• There is no question in my mind that the state or the national organization would not be strong were it not for the strong local P.T.A. One of the things that has been great about the P.T.A. is that with national strengths and help you can still sit down at the local level and handle a problem in a way that is best for your own community.

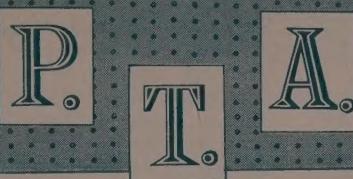
► Do we sometimes forget our normal children in our efforts to serve the smaller percentage with special needs?

DR. ELMOTT

• Most progress made in schools in relation to service for all children has come through the special programs developed for individual children with special needs. It is important to keep in mind the possibilities of extending any new program that is set up for children with special needs. Kindergartens that came first for mentally deficient children in Rome were later translated to the needs of the normal, well-adjusted child.

Convention Bonus

• The 1956 "Convention Digest" will soon be ready for mailing to everyone who registered at the National Congress convention. The essence of the convention programs as presented in the "Digest" reflects the unusual inspiration found in the sessions and offers positive help for the development of local and state action programs.



BULLETIN BOARD

Brief Items of Current Interest

● **THE PARENT EDUCATION COMMITTEE** of the Severance Millikin Elementary School P.T.A. (Cleveland Heights, Ohio) instituted an "Over the Coffee Cups" series of gatherings in homes. Parents, assembled according to their children's school levels, boiled down viewpoints, exchanged ideas, and formed new friendships. Follow-up meetings on topics of greatest interest were scheduled for P.T.A. meetings soon after.

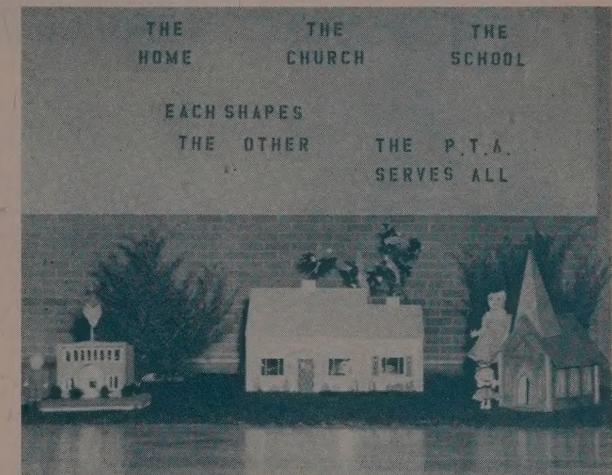
● **THE FIRST ANNUAL HEALTH CLINIC** sponsored by the Waller Elementary School P.T.A. in Bossier City, Louisiana, checked the vision and hearing of more than one thousand children and discovered 120 youngsters in need of sight and hearing correction. P.T.A. members did the screening, using equipment supplied by the school board, and recorded the data on student health records.

● **A HIGH SCHOOL PRINCIPAL FROM GERMANY** who wanted to see the P.T.A. in action at the local level was the guest of P.T.A.'s in Salem, Oregon, recently. The visitor was Karl Weiss, from Heilbronn, near Stuttgart. To get a grass-roots view of P.T.A. activity, he attended meetings of the Richmond Elementary School and North Salem High School P.T.A.'s. Dr. Weiss reported that at present parent-teacher associations as such do not exist in Germany. However, each of the nine grades in the elementary schools has a parent group that meets two or three times a year.



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● Mrs. Fred L. Keeler (right), president of the Michigan Congress, explains the use of exhibit cases prepared by the congress. The special cases—two-paneled, hinged, and handled—serve to promote and extend the use of Congress publications. Mrs. Mark Goddard, director of Michigan District 7, proves to herself that the exhibit case also is light in weight and easy to carry.



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● This exhibit formed the background for a city-wide installation of P.T.A. officers in Temple, Texas.

● **A MEDICAL CIVIL DEFENSE CLASS** is being sponsored by the Noble School P.T.A. (Detroit, Michigan) for residents of the neighborhood. The school has been selected as one of eighteen casualty stations in Detroit to give medical care in case of need.

● **THE "EYEGLASS FUND"** of the Nausauket School P.T.A. (Warwick, Rhode Island) gives a helping hand to needy families in the school. When disaster such as fire strikes a home, the unit supplies the family with food, clothing, and toys—and even replaces the children's eyeglasses.

● **AN UNEXPECTED OPPORTUNITY** to publicize P.T.A. effort in Pima County (Arizona) was given to Mrs. James O. Gipson, president of the Pima County Council. When the editor of the *Tucson Daily Citizen* went on vacation, he invited Mrs. Gipson to take over the editorial-writing task for a day. Mrs. Gipson devoted her column to a discussion of the goals and activities of the county's forty-eight units.

● **THERE'S NO EXCUSE** for members of the John C. Ritzman Elementary School P.T.A. (Akron, Ohio) to be uninformed, P.T.A.-wise or school-wise. At every meeting they're handed a mimeographed bulletin chock-full of news about what's going on in their unit and school. According to Mrs. E. L. Cottrill, bulletin chairman, the purposes of the bulletins are to give members an insight into work of the committees; to present news of school projects and problems; and to inform members on local, state, and national P.T.A. activities.

Citizenship Day — 1956

September 17

• So that "all our people may gain a deeper appreciation of the great heritage secured to us by the Constitution," President Eisenhower has called for a wide observance of Citizenship Day, September 17. In his official proclamation the President said:

With the passing of the years the basic soundness and the durability of the principles embodied in our Constitution become increasingly evident. The test of time has served to strengthen our pride and belief in the greatness of our country and has inspired us to an ever firmer determination that the carrying out of the responsibilities of citizenship, as well as the exercise of its rights and privileges, shall play an important role in our daily lives.

We in the P.T.A. are all aware that citizenship must be practiced every day of the year, but the value of a concentrated and consecrated effort to bring before our members and our communities what the word can and does mean cannot be doubted. Let's start NOW with our planning.

Last year Thomas J. Curtin, citizenship chairman of the Massachusetts Congress, sent the following suggested program to units in that state:

1. Pledge of Allegiance.
2. Reading of President Eisenhower's Citizenship Day proclamation.
3. Reading of the Preamble to the Constitution.
4. Devotional exercise—followed by one minute of silence in which each person privately gives thanks for his own blessings under liberty.
5. Appropriate music.
6. An address on "The Blessings of Liberty," or a tableau "Counting Your Blessings," consisting of short, simple statements from each of the following on the most significant blessing that American citizenship confers on him: a boy and a girl student, a voter, a housewife, a naturalized citizen, a business manager or owner, and a laborer.
7. The National Anthem.
- When we observe Citizenship Day, we are sowing the seeds of knowledge, appreciation, and gratitude for the privilege of being an American citizen.

—Mrs. Albert Solomon, *Citizenship Chairman
National Congress of Parents and Teachers*



Haskell B. Osborn

register at the National Congress booth at the convention of the American Association of School Administrators.

In the May *Bulletin* the man shown registering at the P.T.A. booth was identified incorrectly as Mr. Osborn. The man in that picture was Joseph Hill, principal of Lincoln High School in San Francisco, who, like Mr. Osborn, is a P.T.A. booster. Mr. Hill was the first registrant at the National Congress booth at the convention of the National Association of Secondary-School Principals.

ANOTHER STATE OFFERS SCHOLARSHIPS

The Kentucky Congress of Parents and Teachers has instituted a new scholarship fund plan, granting one scholarship of \$500 each year to a junior or senior in teacher training in an accredited Kentucky college or university. The award is to be made on the basis of the student's scholarship, his aptitude for teaching, and his need. He must agree to teach in Kentucky schools for at least two years.

The Kentucky Congress also offers five \$100 summer-term scholarships to in-service teachers who want to work for A.B. or master's degrees in education. These will be granted on a basis similar to that of the scholarship for the student who is in training.

Scholarships are now possible because congress funds, accumulated through the sale of state life memberships, have grown sufficiently for the program.

TEACHING IN YOUR TOWN

► Is your town having difficulty attracting and keeping good teachers? A practical first step to solving the problem was suggested by Mrs. Rollin Brown, president of the National Congress of Parents and Teachers, in her address to the White House Conference on Education. She proposed that individuals raise the following kinds of questions with their acquaintances:

1. Why should a teacher wish to come to our town?
2. Where will he live?
3. What kind of place is our school? Attractive, although possibly simple, or "good enough"?
4. What teaching materials and equipment do we supply?
5. What is the pupil-teacher ratio?
6. Do we recognize that teachers, too, are human beings with feelings, tastes, and opinions?
7. Do we accept teachers as interesting and important members of our community, or do we set them apart where we may scrutinize and criticize at will?
8. When new teachers come to us, do we take pains to see that they become acquainted, particularly if they are young and on their first teaching assignment?
9. If we hear that a teacher's methods are unlike those we once knew, do we reject without investigation any deviation from the procedures of our own little red school house, or do we take the trouble to find out why changes have seemed appropriate?
10. What kind of salary schedule have we? What is the differential between minimum and maximum? Is this an inducement for qualified personnel to remain with us? Are we preparing teachers for other states?
11. Upon what kind of tax structure is our school system based?

► A P.T.A. committee might well undertake to secure the answers to these questions. Honest, thoughtful, factual answers will indicate what the teaching situation is. Upon such an evaluation a community might build a program to accomplish necessary improvements.